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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2005

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The spray program eradicated 18,086 hectares of coca in February. Colombian Army (COLAR) and Colombian National Police Antinarcotics Directorate (DIRAN) units conducted joint interdiction operations (septel). Colombian Army Plan Colombia helicopters provided 1,993 hours of support to the COLAR Counternarcotics (CD) Brigade and DIRAN in support of eradication operations. Three HCL labs were destroyed and 250 kilos of cocaine were intercepted on Colombian roads. Mobile Rural Police (Caribinero) squadrons captured 35 narco-traffickers and 135 guerrillas. CNP/ARAVI aircraft completed 1,148 flying hours of support to NAS's various programs. Eradication aircraft conducted medical evacuations of Colombian soldiers. End Summary.

Eradication and Interdiction

12. (U) During the month of February, OV-10s operating from San Jose sprayed approximately 3,634 hectares of coca, while AT-802s operating from Tumaco sprayed approximately 14,223 hectares of coca. The T-65 aircraft sprayed approximately 229 hectares of coca during this period while operating first from Armenia, then from Pasto/Chachagui. In the area of Pasto/Chachagui, the T-65s were also able to begin the first poppy campaign of the year, resulting in 407 hectares of poppy sprayed.

13. (U) On February 19, Eradication Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel in San Jose took part in a simulated "down pilot" exercise at the Colombian military base at El Barrancon. While returning from the exercise the team was alerted to a requirement to fly a medical evacuation mission for an injured soldier. The SAR helicopter, accompanied by escort helicopters, conducted the mission that resulted in the evacuation of two soldiers.

14. (SBU) Eradication and COLAR aircraft were involved in six incidents involving hostile fire during February, resulting in a total of eight hostile fire impacts for the month. Eradication AT-802s received four impacts, T-65s received one impact, and UH-1Ns escort helicopters received one impact. A Plan Colombia UH-60 aircraft received one impact during the month. In addition, a Plan Colombia UH-1N received one impact while escorting an eradication spray package.

15. (SBU) COLAR Plan Colombia helicopters continued to support CD Brigade troops and eradication operations in Larandia, Tumaco, and Chachagui. Plan Colombia helicopters flew over 1,993 hours and transported 2,278 passengers and 232,160 pounds of cargo. Fifty-three flight hours were dedicated to medical evacuation missions to transport 49 patients.

16. (U) The CNP, led by DIRAN, continues to build on their record-setting interdiction performance of CY2004. In February the CNP destroyed 17 cocaine HCL labs and 83 cocaine base labs; over 4.5 metric tons of cocaine HCL and coca base were seized, along with 41 kilos of heroin.

17. (U) The DIRAN Road Interdiction group based in Villavicencio, Meta Department, seized 250 kilos of cocaine at a road interdiction control point in Granada, Meta Department. The cocaine was being transported in the roof of a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Road interdiction operations in Putumayo seized 12 kilos of coca base concealed in soft drink cans.

Interservice Cooperation

18. (SBU) For the first time, COLAR helicopters flew DIRAN troops on cocaine HCL lab interdiction missions. Over an eight-day period, COLAR provided three UH-60 Blackhawk and four Huey-II helicopters to conduct joint interdiction operations in Narino Department. The DIRAN C-26 intelligence/command and control aircraft and one DIRAN UH-60 Blackhawk also supported the missions that destroyed

three cocaine HCl laboratories.

In-Country Training Courses -----

19. (U) The US Army 7th Special Forces Group began the six week Small Unit Tactics course in Espinal, Tolima Department, training 55 Jungla Commandos in Close Quarters Combat Training. The Jungla Commando four-month basic course began on February 22 in Espinal with 98 trainees. The five-week Sapper Course (demolitions) began on February 16 for 45 members of DIRAN. DIRAN base security personnel, accompanied by NAS, conducted base defense training in the DIRAN Northern Zone. In February, 62 CNP members departed for training courses in the United States.

International Police Intelligence Conference -----

10. (U) Representatives from 28 countries and two international organizations met at the CNP Intelligence Directorate (DIPOL) February 17-18 to discuss the challenges of transnational crime and terrorism. Keynote speakers included the former GOC Inspector General and Constitutional Court Justice who discussed Colombia's transition to an accusatory system. The Acting Director of the European Union Police agency (EUROPOL) briefed on advances by that organization to centralize information on terrorism and transnational crime. Europol offered to help form a similar organization for Latin America.

Firewall Exercise Planning Conference -----

11. (U) Representatives from the Colombian Navy, DIRAN, Air Force, UK Embassy, DEA, MILGP and NAS began planning the second Firewall Field Training Exercise that will be held April 4-14, near Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast. Exercise will test reactions of Firewall units against three separate scenarios, each simulating launching of narco go-fasts. The newly installed Firewall communications network will also be tested during the exercise.

Law Enforcement/Public Security -----

12. (U) One new Mobile Carabineros Squadron (EMCAR) and 200 replacement policemen for the existing squadrons completed their training on February 25. To date, a total of 41 Carabineros Squadrons have been trained. The Combat Medics Course began in January with 49 students, 30 EMCAR, 15 DIRAN, 1 GREAS (Colombian Coast Guard), 1 GRATE (CNP Anti-Terrorist Reaction Group), and 2 others.

Security and Democracy Foundation Event -----

13. (U) On February 23, the "Fundacion Seguridad and Democracia" (Security and Democracy Foundation, established with seed money from NAS), held a major conference to examine the sustainability of Colombia's Defense and Security Policy, established by President Uribe's administration (also with USG assistance through a NAS project). Three panels composed of government, academic and outside experts concluded that Colombia was able to sustain its national security strategy. Former President Pastrana, who launched Plan Colombia and the build up of the military and police forces, closed the conference.

Air Bridge Denial -----

14. (U) There was one Phase III event that resulted in the destruction of a drug carrying aircraft and impoundment of 475 kilos of Cocaine. During this month there were over 5200 tracks over Colombia, of which 16 were declared Unknown, Assumed Suspect.

Manual Poppy Eradication (DIRAN) -----

15. (SBU) NAS continues to press the GOC's Plan Colombia Mobile Eradication Unit planners not to compromise security in identifying manual eradication sites. On February 16, a Mobile Eradication Unit walked into a minefield and took sniper fire in Sardinata, Norte de Santander. Though the group suffered no casualties, one third of the campesinos at that site abandoned the program.

16. (U) In Pauna, Boyaca Department, an eight-member local police force eradicated 108 hectares of coca.

CNP Aviation (ARAVI) -----

17. (U) The three largest components of ARAVI's fleet clocked 1,148 mission hours in February: the UH-1H II

helicopters flew 790 mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 49 percent, the Bell 212 helicopters flew 199 mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 66 percent, and the UH-60L helicopters flew 159 mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 70 percent. NAS approved ARAVI support for the "relevo" program of rotating Carabineros in and out of rural police stations. ARAVI also successfully managed the newly established flying hour program (the first in ARAVI's history) for February, with 11 of the 12 aircraft models having a positive balance of hours. Construction of the new hangar complex at ARAVI's Guaymaral base remains on schedule. In-country rescue hoist training for the major airframes was conducted and over-water survival training began. NAS, Lockheed and Lockheed's subcontractor held a program management review (PMR) February 23-24 and agreed to include more specific performance measurements for Lockheed contract in the Task Execution Plan (TEP). The PMR also identified 25 additional action items for completion over the next three months.

Port Security -----

18. (U) NAS, DIRAN airport units, and the Airport Police deployed NAS purchased ION Scanners on a trial basis at Bogota's El Dorado International Airport. A trainer from the manufacturer trained Airport Police, DIRAN airport police, and DIRAN Road Interdiction personnel in the operation of these narcotics/explosives detection devices.

19. (U) NAS and US Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE) began cooperation with the recently vetted Bogot Airport Police by donating radios, flashlights, and hand tools to assist them in internal communication and cargo and luggage inspections.

20. (U) NAS and DIRAN seaport unit commanders participated in a Spanish government-sponsored conference on Narcotics interdiction in seaports at Cartagena.

Environment -----

21. (U) NAS concluded its annual environmental verification throughout Colombia. Analysis of soil samples is in progress.

WOOD